

Teaching to Increase Student Motivation:

Students often have a sense that they have to get the job done to meet a deadline. However, they may not know what the task means - why it is important to know the underlying skills and knowledge. Teachers need to communicate to students the purpose of the assignments (understanding the content they were learning) and the meaning of the assignments. They should be told what skills they will develop by doing the work, and how these skills will be useful, helpful, or enjoyable.

Positive reinforcement:

Teachers who treat their students with respect, and maintain a positive atmosphere, will build a good relationship with their class. Talking with students, and listening to them talk about their interests, also helps build an atmosphere of trust. Using positive reinforcement can [help](#) in building up this learning environment. Students who like and respect their teacher will be more engaged, and less likely to disrupt a classroom. This can be especially helpful with problem students. By taking opportunities to praise their good behavior, a teacher can encourage these preferred behaviors and build a positive relationship and goodwill. Positive reinforcement not only helps bring attention to the behavior that gained approval, but also helps to build an atmosphere of trust and respect that can help to create a more positive and successful learning environment for all. Caution should be exercised in using positive reward, however. Praise should be given for the work and behavior - not for the student themselves. It should be sincere, and it should be reserved for times that the student earned it. Handing out praise where it is not earned lessens its value. Also, using extrinsic rewards can lead to students focusing on the rewards themselves and becoming distracted from or losing intrinsic interest in the task.

How to provoke student participation via genuine interest and/or enthusiasm:

Teachers who display enthusiasm for their topic, and relate stories of how these skills have helped them in the past, help to stimulate students' own interest and involvement.

Students who feel they have a choice, who are actively involved in their education by having a voice in setting their goals and making decisions about attaining them, have a higher level of interest in the class. This has been shown to lead to the students achieving higher and more persistent levels of success. (Jones, 172)

Linking classroom activities to the students' interests can heighten their interest in the subject, especially in at-risk students. A teacher can set the stage at the beginning of a unit or series of lessons by asking students some questions. The teacher can guide the discussion to lead students to make connections between the material and their personal

interests. Students who otherwise might not see the connections to their own interests may now become more involved and less likely to be off task and disruptive. This will result in their interest, motivation, and engagement being increased. (Jones, 189)

Instructional methods that increase student motivation and learning:

Use of ongoing formative assessments by teachers helps to guide student efforts. This should be coupled with timely feedback of sincere recognition of progress, and specific and constructive suggestions for how to improve performance. This can help develop better practices and yield greater success for students in the classroom. (Jones, 174-6)

When a student achieves successful outcomes, and receives recognition for academic tasks, they will become more confident and motivated in the classroom. However, a student may experience failure when the task was too difficult. This could be because the amount of challenge wasn't appropriate for their level of competence. This may result in lowered confidence in the student. Because of this, they may set lower goals, and have reduced motivation. (Jones, 173-4) This could be avoided by using differentiated instruction to tier the level of challenge of assignments to be more appropriate to diverse students.

It has been noted that students of color tend to respond better when the instruction style allows for active student involvement. Some such activities include "think-pair-share, lively group discussions, cooperative learning, group projects, and telling of stories about personal experiences" (Kuykendall (1992) in Jones, 1995, p. 170)

Bibliography

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